

APPENDIX A

Wildland Urban Interface Defined

Hazardous fuels treatment work to create defensible space for the protection of homes and businesses is defined in this plan, and is the basis for grant applications to accomplish mitigation work. In addition, an external boundary within which modification of forest fuels would reinforce this work and help assure its success in the event of a wildfire is defined as the perimeter of the urban interface. **This perimeter is two (2) miles outside places of human habitation and/or the infrastructure that serve these points of habitation.** Infrastructure includes power and communication lines and towers, transportation routes for ingress, egress and evacuation, rail lines, and watersheds where citizen groups have organized for joint collection of water for domestic uses. In instances where topography immediately outside the 2-mile zone would allow “anchoring” to good fire control points, such as ridge tops or roads, the zone will be extended to the anchor point.

Since determination of the “best” location for the 2-mile zone boundary is dependent on local site situations, a mapped location has not been created. Individual project planners will assess where the boundary should lie, in conformance with this written definition. This “perimeter” definition will be helpful to owners or administrators of large blocks of land in their efforts to contribute to fuels work that would make the protection of human habitations in the interface easier and safer.

Rationale for the two mile perimeter:

Humans and their habitations are at greatest risk from wildfire in periods that support extreme fire behavior

For fuel models found in North Idaho, the observed behavior of fires near urban areas indicates that a major component of risk exposure is created by a combination of rate-of-spread and long range spotting. Successful establishment of spot fires in excess of 1 mile from the flaming front of active fires has occurred during several fire events in the county. In these conditions, the spot-fires grow rapidly and generate burning embers that can establish additional spot-fires down-wind. It is felt that for adequate fuel modification work to successfully protect habitation and infrastructure, in these conditions, a buffer of two miles is needed. Fuel modification in this buffer would add tremendously to the effectiveness of hazardous fuels treatment work around individual homes.

Other considerations for the rationale include:

- Fuel modification work within the 2-mile zone along evacuation routes greatly reduces the potential that the routes would be cut off during a wildfire.

- During wind events, downed power lines are frequent ignition sources for fires. Fuel modification treatments in a zone along these structures would significantly reduce the risk to humans and their habitations.

- Bonner County is dependent on surface waters for domestic purposes. This dependency includes residents of cities as well as smaller communities of residents who have developed water intake systems scattered throughout the county. Protection of water sources and water quality is a high priority.

- In fire control operations, “anchoring” the fire line is a fundamental practice, for both effectiveness and for safety of personnel.